

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND ADJUSTMENT DURING EMERGING ADULTHOOD IN SPAIN

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BACKGROUND

Western post-industrial society has experienced a lot of economic, social and cultural changes in the last decades. These have affected most families' daily life. The transition to adulthood has been prolonged and young people are delaying moving out from their parents' homes until well over the age of twenty. This fact requires a readjustment in the family relationship system.

However, there are few researches which focus on family relationships during emerging adulthood (18-25/30 years old). Most of them have been carried out in the United States. Nevertheless, there is a lack of studies in Spain about family relationships during emerging adulthood.

This paper has two aims:

1. to analyse the quality of the relationship between emerging adults and their parents.
2. To assess the link between family bonds and emerging adults' psychological well-being and distress.

METHOD

Participants

The present study involves 1502 university students (903 women and 599 men) aged between 18 and 29 (*Mean*: 20.32; *SD*: 2.13) participating in the Transition to Adulthood in Spain (TAE) research project.

Instruments

Participants fulfilled a questionnaire that included socio-demographic variables (sex and age). Furthermore:

- Family subscale of the Spanish adaptation of the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) (Landeta & Calvete, 2002).
- The Perception of Parents Scale (POPS) (Compilation from Grolnick, Deci & Ryan, 1997; Grolnick, Ryan & Deci, 1991; Robinson, 1994).
- Spanish adaptation of the Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS) (Diaz et al., 2006).
- Spanish adaptation of the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS-21) (Bados, Solanas & Andres, 2005).

RESULTS

Figure 1. Family relationships by sex

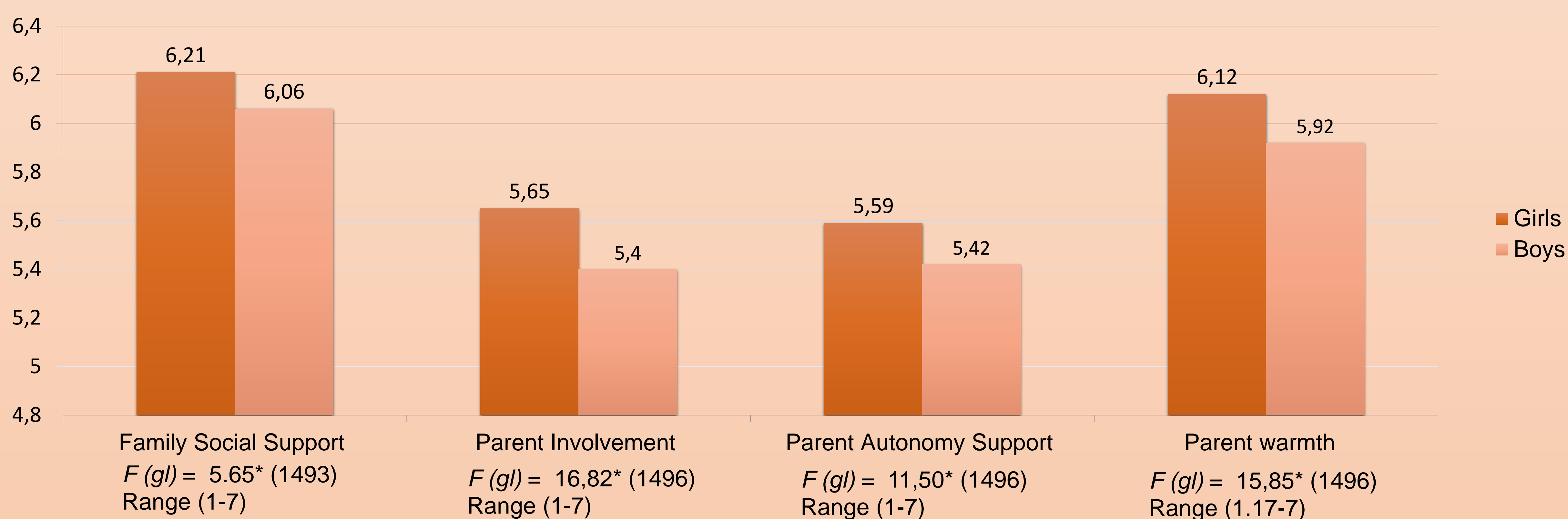


Table 2. Correlations between family variables, general psychological well-being & general psychological distress by gender.

	Psychological Well-being			Psychological Distress		
	TOTAL	Girls	Boys	TOTAL	Girls	Boys
Family Social Support	.32**	.27**	.39**	-.26**	-.24**	-.32**
Parent Involvement	.34**	.31**	.39**	-.27**	-.29**	-.27**
Parent Autonomy Support	.36**	.34*	.38**	-.28**	-.31**	-.26**
Parent warmth	.38**	.34*	.43**	-.27**	-.28**	-.29**

**p < .01. *p < .05.

DISCUSSION

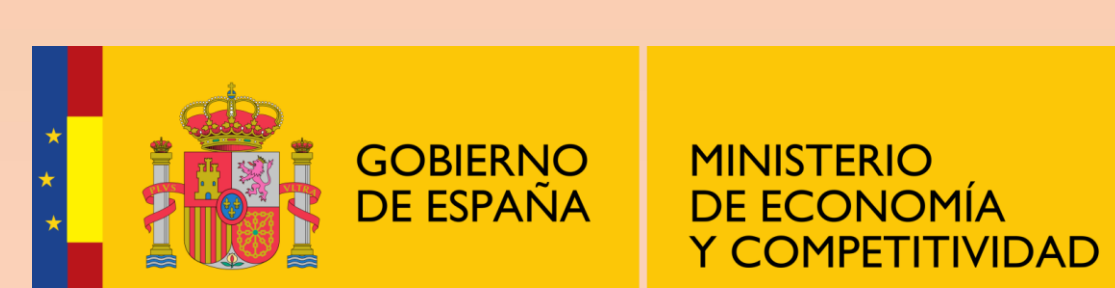
❖ Emerging adults perceive a high level of parent social support, involvement, autonomy support and warmth. Moreover, girls noticed better family relationships than boys. The family seems to be a relevant source of support during emerging adulthood.

❖ Emerging adults, both boys and girls, who sensed better family relationships showed a higher level of general psychological well-being and a lower level of general psychological distress. Positive family relationships could be a protective factor for emerging adults' adjustment in both girls and boys. Our data shows that the family is crucial for the accurate development of people not just during infancy or adolescence, but also during emerging adulthood.

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This study was approved by the relevant institutional ethics committee.